

ARKANSAS WHITE RED INTER-BASIN AGENCY COMMITTEE

STATE OF ARKANSAS FIVE-MINUTE ACTIVITY REPORT

APRIL 2001

NAVIGATION

Corps of Engineers navigation studies are continuing for both the White River and Red River systems in Arkansas. Environmental impact (dike impacts to muscle beds and "out-of-bank" historical spring flows) and conductivity studies are nearing completion for the White River. Study report for the White River Navigation Project is expected in FY 2002. Current Red River navigation studies include: benefit analyses, lock design, and inundation impacts.

MITIGATION BANKING PROGRAM

Commission staff is currently negotiating purchase of a 320-acre mitigation banking site in southeast Arkansas. Multiple bank sites will be developed across Arkansas to meet a portion of 404 permitting needs. On average, over 600 acres of mitigation is required annually in Arkansas. The Arkansas Highway & Transportation Department will take advantage of the banks, as well as other government, private, and public entities.

MINIMUM STEAM FLOW DETERMINATIONS

Public hearings have been held for White River minimum stream flow and allocation level determinations. Public comment period will expire on May 9, 2001. Commission personnel have received dozens of comments and concerns related to proposed levels. The Grand Prairie Irrigation Project proposes to withdraw 1640 cfs from the White River during the growing season (maximum withdrawals in August and September).

Staff is concurrently working on minimum stream flow and allocation level determinations for the Ouachita River from Remmel Dam to the Arkansas-Louisiana state line. Two projects have received non-riparian permits to withdraw 20 and 70 cfs respectively. These projects both include new natural gas power generating facilities (Duke Energy and Panda Inc).

IRRIGATION PROJECTS

Walnut Bayou Project

The Natural Resources Conservation Service and the Little River Conservation District have completed initial feasibility study work. Future efforts will include preliminary design and engineering studies.

Southeast Arkansas Project

The feasibility phase study is continuing. The project proposes to utilize Arkansas River to augment dwindling irrigation supply in the Bayou Bartholomew watershed of southeast Arkansas.

Grand Prairie Demonstration Project

The Corps of Engineers and Natural Resources Conservation Service have completed the pre-construction, engineering, and design phase of this project. Construction of "on farm" reservoir features is currently underway. The project proposes to divert White River water to irrigation approximately 320,000 acres in Prairie, Arkansas, and Lonoke Counties.

Bayou Meto Project

The Corps of Engineers and Natural Resources Conservation Service are completing the pre-construction, engineering, and design phase of this project. This project proposes to divert Arkansas River water to irrigate 431,000 acres in Lonoke, Prairie, Arkansas, and Jefferson Counties.

NON-POINT SOURCE POLLUTION PROGRAM (program review)

Bayou Bartholomew

ASWCC, Cooperative Extension Service, and Ashley, Drew, Jefferson and Lincoln County Conservation Districts are cooperating with the Bayou Bartholomew Alliance to deliver technical assistance and sediment management training to agricultural producers in the bayou. The goal of the project is to restore the beneficial use of aquatic life to the upper third of the bayou by reducing the sediment and turbidity load to the streams.

Water Quality Technician Program

ASWCC has continued funding the water quality technician program that has resulted in a total of 25 state-funded water quality technicians. The primary function of these technicians is to prepare nutrient management plans for poultry farmers. This continues to be an extremely popular program. All Water Quality Technicians were trained to produce plans meeting the comprehensive nutrient management plan standards in February.

Beaver Lake

A watershed project has been initiated with the Washington County and Madison County Conservation Districts, ADEQ, AWRC, CES and the City of Rogers. Tasks include assessment/source inventory, education and training, technical assistance, financial assistance and monitoring and evaluation. The project is working cooperatively with The Beaver Lake Partnership.

Illinois River

The trend toward reduced phosphorus loading in the Illinois River continued during 1999. ASWCC implemented two new projects in the basin, one project works with livestock producers in the Cincinnati Creek area to implement practices to reduce phosphorus runoff and protect critical areas. The other project is an Urban Education/Awareness project in the Mud Creek watershed in Fayetteville. EQIP continues to make the Illinois River a priority. In 1999, the ASWCC implemented a watershed project in the Ballard Creek watershed of the Illinois River; Phase 1 of the project is assessment of sources and an information education program for cattle farmers. The City of Rogers has stated implementing a watershed plan for its portion of the Osage Creek tributary to the Illinois. .

Strawberry River

A new watershed project has been started with the Fulton, IZard and Sharp County Conservation Districts and ADEQ on the Strawberry River. Initial efforts include assessment of Water Quality, Source Inventories, Technical and Financial Assistance. Efforts are directed at livestock agriculture. In the next few months additional work directed at forestry will be started.

GROUND WATER

The ASWCC has designated two critical groundwater areas in Arkansas: The Sparta and Alluvial Aquifers in Arkansas, Jefferson, Prairie, and portions of Lonoke, Pulaski, and White Counties. Union County has formed a countywide board, which is assessing a 24-cent/1,000 gallon fee for Sparta water withdrawn. The board has plans to construct a surface water treatment and distribution project to supplement groundwater use in the county.

SURFACE WATER

Many surface water rights issues have been brought before the Commission over the last year. Low levels in many river oxbow lakes were of great concern during last summer. The Commission has been formally petitioned to establish allocation levels for the Middle Fork of the Saline River, Cache River, Bayou DeView, and Old Town Lake during the past year.

The Corps of Engineers is conducting minimum flow/minimum release study for Bulls Shoals Dam on the White River. This study is investigating the impacts of dam releases to the downstream aquatic fishery.

Scope of work formulation is underway between the Corps of Engineers and potential state partners for the White River Comprehensive Basin Study. The study will assess basin wide needs and provide information to guide future resource decisions in the future.

2001 GENERAL ASSEMBLY

New legislation will require all new ground water wells into a "sustainable aquifer" (i.e. Sparta Aquifer) to be metered. Existing wells will have five years to become metered.